

LIL exits. FAITH reluctantly starts to put the dolls back into the box. HELGA and EVA break their embrace.

EVA: Listen.

HELGA: What?

EVA: I've nearly got it right.

EVA starts to play a tune on the mouth organ. She plays well. EVA finishes playing. HELGA applauds. FAITH pulls out a small box. She opens it and looks inside.

HELGA: Now it's time for bed.

EVA: Not yet. Let me stay up. It's my last night.

HELGA: We will carry on as we always do. Bedtime is bedtime.

EVA: Moaning, Mutti.

HELGA: Which story do you want?

HELGA turns and picks up EVA's Rattenfänger book. EVA quickly sneaks her mouth organ into the case and closes it.

EVA: The Ratcatcher

FAITH pulls out a hard-backed children's storybook identical to the one HELGA is holding. Pipe music.

FAITH: Der Rattenfänger.

HELGA: Not that one Eva.

EVA: You said I could choose.

HELGA: Choose something else.

EVA: I don't want anything else.

HELGA opens the book and turns its pages. EVA draws away from her, puts on her coat and hat and picks up the case.

FAITH: The Ratcatcher?

EVA: What did you say an abyss was, Mutti?

HELGA: I hope you won't ask questions like this when you're in England.

EVA: Why not?

HELGA: Listen.

FAITH opens the book and flicks through it. She finds an inscription in the front of the book. EVA sits close to HELGA.

HELGA: "Beware little children. Take heed and learn the lesson of Hamlyn where one bad soul brought tragedy upon the whole town."

FAITH: "Hamburg. 1939."

HELGA: "Happy Hamlyn after the rats had been led away ...

FAITH carefully looks at the first page.

HELGA: ... A town teeming with life. Full to overflowing. And every day, the good people counted their blessings. Every single one." ... Eva?

EVA: I'm listening.

FAITH: Looking at a picture, Counting their blessings for being so lucky..

HELGA: "They all knew how fortunate they were. All except for one very wicked soul who was ungrateful and did not count."

FAITH: Looking at another picture, Mr. Ingratitude. Jesus

HELGA: "We are forgotten. We are lost..."

EVA: "... We are destroyed..."

HELGA: "...cried out all the uncounted blessings."

FAITH: "The cloud..."

HELGA: "Then a cloud appeared in the clear, blue sky casting a shadow down below."

EVA: "Who is not counting?"

HELGA: "Whispered the shadow."

EVA: "Who has forgotten their blessings?"

HELGA: "It hissed."

EVA: "I will find you."

HELGA: "It spat."

EVA: "I will search you out whoever, wherever you are."

FAITH: *Turning onto another page, My God, and the shadow growing legs...*

HELGA: ...and strong arms and spiky nails...

EVA: And eyes sharp as razors.

FAITH: The Ratcatcher.

*The shadow of the RATCATCHER hovers. A train whistle blows. Sounds of a busy railway station. HELGA remains stuck in bedtime story mode. EVA puts on her coat and hat and label with her number on it—3362.*

HELGA: The Ratcatcher searched for the ungrateful one. He searched and searched but all in vain.

RATCATCHER: Who is to pay for the lost blessings?

HELGA: He raged.

RATCATCHER: If not the one guilty soul, then all.

HELGA: And he raised an enchanted pipe to his snarling lip, making a cruel promise to all the people of Hamlyn.

RATCATCHER: I will take the heart of your happiness away.

← END

*The RATCATCHER plays his music. The sounds of the railway station become louder and louder. Another train whistle.*

EVA: Mutti! Vati! Hello! Hello! See. I did get into the carriage. I said I would. See, I'm not crying. I said I wouldn't. I can't open the window! It's sealed tight! Why've you taken your gloves off? You're knocking too hard. Your knuckles are going red! What? I can't hear you!

*Sound of long, shrill train whistle.*

EVA: Louder! Louder! What? I can't hear! I can't ... See you in England.

*Sounds of train starting to move. EVA sits.*

EVA: I mustn't stare at that cross-eyed boy.

*Train whistle blows.*

EVA: What if he talks to me?

*Sounds of children chattering. Suddenly a young child cries and cries.*

EVA: You mustn't cry. There's no point.

*The crying continues.*

EVA: Stop it.

*The crying continues.*

EVA: We'll all see our muttis and vatis soon enough.

*The crying calms slightly.*